

Organizes Self, Materials, and Belongings

What does “Organizes Self, Materials, and Belongings” mean?

This skill is about how children manage themselves and their things. It shows an understanding that there is a place for everything and everything should be where it belongs. For example, children demonstrate this skill by putting their homework in their homework folder instead of just in their backpack. This skill shows that children are learning about order and are starting to manage themselves and their things.

TIPS for FAMILIES

How can I explain this skill to my child?

Let your child know that it is helpful to have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. When you have a special place for all of your things, you can find them easily and know where to put them back when you are finished using them. Ask your child to remember a time when they went to get a favorite toy and couldn't find it. Ask them how they felt when they couldn't find it. By always returning things to their place, we can find them quickly. You can also encourage children to check themselves and make sure everything is where it belongs. For example, after children use the bathroom encourage them to look at themselves and make sure everything is in the right place (pants and belt are buckled, shirt is tucked in, shoes are tied). When things are organized and in the right place, we can spend more time having fun and learning!

What are some things I can do to help my child learn this skill?

TIP1

Use simple organization. Help your child find a specific place to put different things, like books and toys. Include them in the process of figuring out where to keep things so they feel responsible for their belongings. You can also use simple labels like the ones below so your child remembers where things go. For example, put a label on a box that holds all of their puzzles and a different label on a box that holds their blocks.

PUZZLES



BLOCKS



TIP2

Model organization. Show your child how you organize things in your daily life by talking through your organizational routines. For example, when you get home and are taking off your coat and shoes, you can say things like, “First I am going to hang up my coat so it doesn’t get dirty. Then I am going to take off my shoes and put them away so they are easy to find when I need to wear them again tomorrow!” By showing your child how organize things in your life, you help them build this skill for themselves.

TIP3

Organization between school and home. Children’s things can often get disorganized between home and school. Creating a system of organization for things that travel between home and school is helpful. One way to do this is to talk to your child’s teacher about how things like homework will travel between home and school. You can then help your child manage these things. For example, if your child’s teacher gives each child a homework folder to bring home every day, remind your child to check their homework folder each night. Remember that you can help your child be organized but shouldn’t do everything for them. Children must learn to take responsibility for organizing their own things with reminders and help from you when they need them.

TIP4

Backpack checklist. You can create a backpack checklist to help your child remember what should be inside their backpack every day before they go to school. Hang a backpack checklist on the wall where your child stores their backpack to remind them what should be in their bag before they leave for school each day. Here is an example of a backpack checklist:

My Backpack Checklist for School	
Before I leave home every day, I make sure I have my ...	
<input type="checkbox"/>	My folder for home and school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lunchbox
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gloves, hat, scarf
<input type="checkbox"/>	Books I borrowed from the classroom

TIP5

Break it down. You can help your child learn how to be organized by providing specific instructions instead of general ones. Specific instructions break down organization into a series of steps that are easier for children to follow. You can also ask children to repeat the steps back to you to make sure they heard them. Here are some examples of ways to break down organization.

Instead of this general instruction...

Say these specific instructions...

“Please clean your room.”

“First, put your books back on the bookshelf. Next, put your toys back in the toybox. Before you finish, look around the room and see if anything is not put away. If you see something left out, put it back in its place.”

“Please put your laundry away”

“First, put your socks away in the first drawer. Then, put your t-shirts on one side of the second drawer. Now, put your long-sleeve shirts on the other side of the second drawer. Last, put your pants away in the third drawer.”

How can I encourage my child when I see them trying to learn this skill?

Acknowledge your child for their efforts! For example, tell your child, “Look how hard you are working to keep your desk organized, Toscha!” or “Matthew, you are really trying your best to put your toys back where they belong.”

To learn more about the tips and where they came from, please visit our references page: ckphilly.org/citations